

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

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USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 3010

FOR CNO ADMIRAL ZUMWALT FROM AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS

SUBJECT: LOGISTICS DD FOR VENEZUELA

REF: A. CNO 291328Z MAR 74

B. CNO 081917Z MAR 74

1. I RECEIVED VENEZUELAN CNO ADMIRAL PEREZ LEEFMANS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND WENT OVER WITH HIM DETAILS OF US NAVY OFFER OF DD-874, USS DUNCAN, FOR CANNIBALIZATION FOR SPARE PARTS AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT WITH FURTHER CONDITION THAT HULL BE BROKEN UP WITHIN 12-18 MONTHS. I LEFT WITH ADMIRAL PEREZ A DRAFT IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH OF THE KIND OF LETTER WHICH VENEZUELAN NAVY OR GOVERNMENT MIGHT FIND IT CONVENIENT TO HAND TO DEPARTMENT AND DOD SPELLING OUT CONDITIONS AS OUTLINED REFTELS.

2. ADMIRAL PEREZ IS INDEED INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING DUNCAN AND THE FOLLOWING GUPPY SUBMARINE, PERMISSION FOR WHOSE TRANSFER TO VENEZUELA FOR SCRAP I UNDERSTAND HAS BEEN APPROVED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE UNDER DATE OF FEBRUARY 22. HOWEVER, HE QUITE NATURALLY WISHES TO EXAMINE THESE VESSELS AND TO MAKE A CALCULATION AS TO COST OF TOW AWAY PRICE AT \$102,000 AND COST OF TOW ITSELF. NEVERTHELESS, PEREZ IS FULLY AWARE OF BARGIN VALUE OF THIS DESTROYER AND IS ALREADY
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ANTICIPATING USING HER ENGINE AND BOILER ROOM EQUIPMENT

TOGETHER WITH SHAFTS AND PROPELLERS AS SPARE PARTS FOR THE TWO RECENTLY ACQUIRED US-BUILT DESTROYERS.

3. WE NOW COME TO A PROBLEM OF TIMING. PEREZ HAS TWO OFFICERS IN PUERTO CABELLO WHO CAN DEPART FOR US BY APRIL 15 BUT BECAUSE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT WILL LITERALLY CLOSE DOWN DURING HOLY WEEK, HE FEARS IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO GET THEM PASSPORTS IN TIME TO MAKE THE APRIL 9 DEADLINE FOR INSPECTION ESTABLISHED REF B. SIMILARLY, IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR VENEZUELAN NAVY TO TOW AWAY DUNCAN BY APRIL 29 FOR REASON THAT ITS ONE FLEET TUG IS CURRENTLY UNDER EXTENSIVE OVERHAUL AT PUERTO CABELLO. ADMIRAL PEREZ ESTIMATED THAT THIS TUG WOULD NOT BE READY TO STEAM IN LESS THAN SIX WEEKS TO TWO MONTHS (WHICH WE HEARD AS AN OPTIMISTIC ESTIMATE). AS MATTERS STAND NOW, VENEZUELAN NAVY IS KEENLY INTERESTED IN ACQUISITION BOTH OF THE DD AND A GUPPY SUBMARINE FOR CANNIBALIZATION PURPOSES. I WOULD VERY MUCH HOPE THAT TIME LIMITS FIRST EXPRESSED BY US NAVY (REF B) AS TO INSPECTION AND TOW AWAY DATES CAN BE EXTENDED TO ACCOMMODATE VENEZUELAN NAVY IN BEING ABLE TO USE ITS OWN TUG FOR THIS PURPOSE. FURTHERMORE, US NAVY WILL REALIZE TRAINING ADVANTAGES IF VENEZUELAN SEND THEIR OWN TUG TO SAN DIEGO AND SEE HOW A US NAVAL BASE RIGS A DECOMMISSIONED VESSEL FOR A LONG TOW AT SEA.

4. DURING OUR CONVERSATION, IT WAS EVIDENT THAT ADMIRAL PEREZ HAS INSTITUTED A COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF VENEZUELAN NAVY NOT ONLY IN RESPECT OF TURNING TOWARD US NAVY FOR SHIPS AND GUIDANCE BUT ALSO IN INSTITUTING US PROCEDURES WHICH HAD BEEN UNHEARD OF IN VENEZUELAN NAVY OVER LAST HALF CENTURY. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAS INTRODUCED A KEEL TO TRUCK JOB-DESCRIPTION SYSTEM COVERING ALL RANKS IN THE NAVY, HAS INTRODUCED A COMMISSARY SYSTEM BASED ON US NAVY MODEL, AND HAS OVERHAULED HIS SHIPBUILDING FACILITY AT PUERTO CABELLO ATTEMPTING TO FOLLOW SO FAR AS POSSIBLE US NAVAL LOGISTIC AND ENGINEERING PRINCIPLES. HE ALSO IS MOST HOPEFUL OF BEING ABLE TO INTEGRATE VENEZUELAN NAVY INTO THE U.S. CO-OP LOG WHICH IS ALREADY ON POINT OF INITIATION WITH VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE FOR THE US NAVY TPE S-2E ASW AIRCRAFT.

5. I RECOMMEND IN VIEW OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS THAT US NAVY BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE TWO VENEZUELAN INSPECTION OFFICERS COME APRIL 15 AND THAT IF VENEZUELAN NAVY DECIDES TO ACCEPT DUNCAN

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UNDER TERMS OUTLINED REFTELS, TOW-AWAY DATE BE EXTENDED UNTIL SUCH TIME AS VENEZUELAN FLEET TUG CAN REACH SAN DIEGO. ALTHOUGH I REALIZE FROM ADMIRAL ZUMWALT'S MESSAGE REF A THAT CNO IS ANXIOUS TO STREAMLINE OUR MOTHBALL FLEETS, WE WOULD HOPE THAT DUNCAN COULD SWING TO A BUOY IN SAN DIEGO UNTIL THE VENEZUELAN TUG TURNS UP.

6. WARM REGARDS.

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